

Chesapeake Bay Foundation, the Chesapeake Conservancy, Choose Clean Water Coalition, American Flood Coalition Action, the Nature Conservancy, Southern Environmental Law Center, and Wetlands Watch. I was glad to see that Representative BOBBY SCOTT successful in including his bipartisan companion EMRBACE Act as an amendment to the House version of the National Defense Authorization Act NDAA for fiscal year 2022. It is my hope that this legislation will be included in the NDAA upon its final passage in Congress.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Mr. MARSHALL, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Ms. ERNST):

S. 3203. A bill to establish the Commission on the COVID-19 Pandemic; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today to speak in support of my bipartisan bill, the National Commission on the COVID-19 Pandemic Act. This bill would establish a 9/11-style Commission to conduct an investigation on the COVID-19 outbreak and identify lessons learned regarding preparedness, response, and recovery. I would like to thank my cosponsors, Senators MARSHALL, GILLIBRAND, and ERNST, for joining me in introducing this crucial bill.

Like we did after the devastating September 11 terrorist attacks, our bill would establish a bipartisan Commission on the COVID-19 pandemic to better understand the vulnerabilities it has revealed in our national security and healthcare system and improve our preparedness for future crises.

It is crucial to improve our understanding of pandemic threats and health issues that the United States could face in the coming decades to better protect our population and mitigate the risk of a similar human and economic catastrophe in the future.

To date, COVID-19 has caused more than 750,000 deaths in the United States and infected at least 46 million people.

Beyond the devastating toll it has taken on human lives, the pandemic revealed vulnerabilities in our preparedness for dealing with such a deadly virus.

At the beginning of the U.S. outbreak, hospitals struggled to secure enough personal protective equipment to keep health workers safe. As the pandemic worsened, we saw additional shortages in critical medical equipment like ventilators and other medical products that save lives, including testing supplies.

As we waited for effective treatments and vaccines to be developed and approved, testing and mask wearing supplemented with physical distancing and other nonpharmaceutical tools were our only weapons combating the spread of the virus. However, we knew these tactics alone wouldn't ultimately defeat the virus.

After unprecedented scientific collaboration and innovation, we now fi-

nally have three FDA-approved COVID-19 vaccines that are safe, effective, and free for all Americans. While getting as many people vaccinated as possible remains the only path out of the pandemic, barriers to access and misunderstanding about the safety of the vaccines have delayed too many Americans from getting their vaccine.

Disturbingly, throughout the pandemic, we have seen an increase in hate crimes against the Asian American and Pacific Islander community due to racially discriminatory language related to COVID-19. Possible underreporting means this problem may be even more prevalent than we know.

Finally, after examining all available intelligence reporting and information, the intelligence community remains divided on the most likely origin of COVID-19. According to the latest declassified assessment on COVID-19 origins, more information is needed to provide a more definitive explanation of how the virus emerged.

The Commission that would be established by our bipartisan bill would conduct a comprehensive investigation of our government's preparedness and response to the COVID-19 pandemic and make recommendations on how we can be better prepared in the future.

Modeled after the 9/11 Commission, this investigative body would complement other oversight efforts in Congress and the administration.

The Commission would be composed of 10 members who aren't current Federal officials, with the same partisan balance as the 9/11 Commissioners and with a variety of backgrounds in relevant fields, including public health, epidemiology, emergency preparedness, medical intelligence, and others; provide a full accounting to the President, Congress, and the American people of the facts and circumstances related to the outbreak in the United States as well as abroad, including our preparedness, the intelligence and information we had available before the virus reached the United States, and how Federal, State, and local governments, as well as the private sector, responded to the crisis; and gather information and hold hearings to eventually publish public reports on the Commission's findings and recommendations.

The global COVID-19 pandemic showed just how unprepared we were to respond to a major public health threat that has continued for almost 2 years. This lack of readiness caused widespread shutdowns of society in the United States and across the globe, resulting in a number of preventable deaths too high to comprehend.

As we mourn those we lost, we must acknowledge that this pandemic is still not over and the threat of a new virus emerging that has greater pandemic potential looms. This Commission will ensure we learn from our achievements as well as our tragedies during this modern plague so that it may never happen again.

I want to thank the Infectious Diseases Society of America for their sup-

port of our bill, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to pass it.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 440—RECOGNIZING NATIONAL NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH AND CELEBRATING THE HERITAGES AND CULTURES OF NATIVE AMERICANS AND THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF NATIVE AMERICANS TO THE UNITED STATES

Mr. SCHATZ (for himself, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. CANTWELL, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. KAINE, Mr. KING, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. LUJÁN, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. MORAN, Mr. PADILLA, Ms. ROSEN, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. SINEMA, Ms. SMITH, Mr. TESTER, Ms. WARREN, Ms. HIRONO, and Mr. SULLIVAN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 440

Whereas, from November 1, 2021, through November 30, 2021, the United States celebrates National Native American Heritage Month;

Whereas National Native American Heritage Month is an opportunity to consider and recognize the contributions of Native Americans to the history of the United States;

Whereas Native Americans are descendants of the original, Indigenous inhabitants of what is now the United States;

Whereas the Bureau of the Census estimates that—

(1) in 2020, there were 9,666,058 individuals of American Indian and Alaska Native descent in the United States; and

(2) in 2019, there were 607,010 individuals of Native Hawaiian descent in the United States;

Whereas Native Americans maintain vibrant cultures and traditions and hold a deeply rooted sense of community;

Whereas Native Americans have moving stories of tragedy, triumph, and perseverance that need to be shared with future generations;

Whereas Native Americans speak and preserve Indigenous languages, which have contributed to the English language by being used as names of individuals and locations throughout the United States;

Whereas Congress has consistently reaffirmed support for Tribal self-governance and self-determination policies for Native American communities and the commitment of the United States to improving the lives of all Native Americans by—

(1) enhancing health care and law enforcement resources; and

(2) improving the housing and socioeconomic status of Native Americans;

Whereas the United States is committed to strengthening the government-to-government relationship that the United States has maintained with the various Indian Tribes;

Whereas Congress has recognized the contributions of the Iroquois Confederacy and the influence of the Iroquois Confederacy on the Founding Fathers in the drafting of the Constitution of the United States with the concepts of—

(1) freedom of speech;

(2) the separation of governmental powers; and

(3) the system of checks and balances between the branches of government;

Whereas, with the enactment of the Native American Heritage Day Act of 2009 (Public Law 111–33; 123 Stat. 1922), Congress—

(1) reaffirmed the government-to-government relationship between the United States and Native American governments; and

(2) recognized the important contributions of Native Americans to the culture of the United States;

Whereas Native Americans have made distinct and important contributions to the United States and the rest of the world in many fields, including the fields of agriculture, environmental stewardship, wayfinding, medicine, music, dance, language, and art;

Whereas contemporary applications of traditional knowledge systems of Native Americans have expanded scientific, environmental, and intercultural understanding;

Whereas Native Americans have distinguished themselves as inventors, entrepreneurs, spiritual leaders, and scholars;

Whereas Native Americans have served with honor and distinction in the Armed Forces and continue to serve in the Armed Forces in greater numbers per capita than any other group in the United States;

Whereas the United States has recognized the contribution of the Native American code talkers in World War I and World War II, who used Indigenous languages as an unbreakable military code, saving countless lives in the United States; and

Whereas the people of the United States have reason to honor the great achievements and contributions of Native Americans and their ancestors: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the month of November 2021 as “National Native American Heritage Month”;

(2) recognizes the Friday after Thanksgiving as “Native American Heritage Day” in accordance with section 2(10) of the Native American Heritage Day Act of 2009 (Public Law 111–33; 123 Stat. 1923); and

(3) urges the people of the United States to observe National Native American Heritage Month and Native American Heritage Day with appropriate programs and activities.

SENATE RESOLUTION 441—DESIGNATING NOVEMBER 6, 2021, AS “NATIONAL BISON DAY”

Mr. HOEVEN (for himself, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BRAUN, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. LUJÁN, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. MORAN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. SCHUMER, Ms. SMITH, Mr. TESTER, Mr. THUNE, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Mr. BOOZMAN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 441

Whereas, on May 9, 2016, the North American bison was adopted as the national mammal of the United States;

Whereas bison are considered a historical and cultural symbol of the United States;

Whereas bison are integrally linked with the economic and spiritual lives of many Indian Tribes through trade and sacred ceremonies;

Whereas there are approximately 76 Indian Tribes participating in the InterTribal Buffalo Council, which is a Tribal organization incorporated pursuant to section 17 of the Act of June 18, 1934 (commonly known as the “Indian Reorganization Act”) (48 Stat. 988, chapter 576; 25 U.S.C. 5124);

Whereas numerous members of Indian Tribes are involved in bison restoration on Tribal land;

Whereas members of Indian Tribes have a combined herd of almost 20,000 bison on more than 1,000,000 acres of Tribal land;

Whereas bison play an important role in the health of the wildlife, landscapes, and grasslands of the United States;

Whereas bison hold significant economic value for private producers and Tribal and rural communities;

Whereas, as of 2017, the Department of Agriculture estimates that 182,780 head of bison were under the stewardship of private producers, creating jobs and contributing to the food security of the United States by providing a sustainable and healthy meat source;

Whereas a bison has been depicted on the official seal of the Department of the Interior since 1912;

Whereas the Department of the Interior has launched the Bison Conservation Initiative, a 10-year cooperative initiative to coordinate the conservation and restoration of wild American bison;

Whereas a bison is portrayed on 2 State flags;

Whereas the bison has been adopted by 3 States as the official mammal or animal of those States;

Whereas the buffalo nickel played an important role in modernizing the currency of the United States;

Whereas several sports teams and businesses have the bison as a mascot, which highlights the iconic and cultural significance of bison in the United States;

Whereas Indigenous communities and a group of ranchers helped save bison from extinction in the late 1800s by gathering the remaining bison of the diminished herds;

Whereas, on December 8, 1905, William Hornaday, Theodore Roosevelt, and others formed the American Bison Society in response to the near extinction of bison in the United States;

Whereas, on October 11, 1907, the American Bison Society sent 15 captive-bred bison from the New York Zoological Park, now known as the “Bronx Zoo”, to the first big game refuge in the United States, now known as the “Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge”;

Whereas, in 2005, the American Bison Society was reestablished, bringing together bison ranchers, Native American leaders and bison herd managers, Federal and State agencies, conservation organizations, artists and writers, young people, and natural and social scientists from the United States, Canada, and Mexico to create a vision for the North American bison in the 21st century;

Whereas there are bison herds in national wildlife refuges, national parks, and national forests, and on other Federal land;

Whereas there are bison in State-managed herds across 11 States;

Whereas private, public, and Tribal bison leaders are working together to continue bison restoration throughout North America;

Whereas there is a growing effort to celebrate and officially recognize the historical, cultural, and economic significance of the North American bison to the heritage of the United States; and

Whereas members of Indian Tribes, bison producers, conservationists, sportsmen, educators, and other public and private partners have celebrated the annual National Bison Day since 2012 and are committed to continuing this tradition annually on the first Saturday of November: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates November 6, 2021, the first Saturday of November, as “National Bison Day”; and

(2) encourages the people of the United States to observe the day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

SENATE RESOLUTION 442—ESTABLISH THE SFC SEAN COOLEY AND SPC CHRISTOPHER HORTON CONGRESSIONAL GOLD STAR FAMILY FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM FOR THE SENATE, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Mrs. BLACKBURN (for herself, Mr. CRAPO, Ms. SINEMA, Ms. ROSEN, Ms. ERNST, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mr. PETERS, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. HAGERTY, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. WICKER, and Mr. WARNOCK) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 442

Resolved,

SECTION 1. SFC SEAN COOLEY AND SPC CHRISTOPHER HORTON CONGRESSIONAL GOLD STAR FAMILY FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

(1) the term “eligible individual” means an individual who meets the eligibility criteria established under subsection (d)(1)(A);

(2) the term “Program” means the SFC Sean Cooley and SPC Christopher Horton Congressional Gold Star Family Fellowship Program established under subsection (b); and

(3) the term “Sergeant at Arms” means the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper of the Senate.

(b) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than December 31, 2023, and subject to the availability of appropriations, the Sergeant at Arms shall establish a fellowship program to be known as the SFC Sean Cooley and SPC Christopher Horton Congressional Gold Star Family Fellowship Program for family members of members of the Armed Forces who die in the line of duty or of veterans who die of service-connected injuries.

(c) FELLOWSHIPS.—Under the Program, an eligible individual may serve a 24-month fellowship in the office of a Senator.

(d) ADMINISTRATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Committee on Rules and Administration of the Senate shall promulgate regulations for the administration of the Program, including establishing the criteria for—

(A) eligibility to participate in a fellowship under the Program; and

(B) a method of prioritizing the assignment of fellowships to the offices of Senators under the Program, if the amount made available to carry out the Program for a fiscal year is not enough to provide fellowships in all offices requesting to participate in the Program for such fiscal year.

(2) PLACEMENT.—An eligible individual may serve in a fellowship under the Program at the office of a Senator in the District of Columbia or at a State office of the Senator.

(3) AUTHORITY FOR AGREEMENT.—The Sergeant at Arms may enter into an agreement with the Chief Administrative Officer of the House of Representatives for the joint operation of the Program, the Congressional Gold Star Family Fellowship Program established under House Resolution 107, 116th Congress, agreed to October 29, 2019, and the Wounded Warrior Fellowship Program carried out by the Chief Administrative Officer.

(e) EXCLUSION OF APPOINTEES FOR PURPOSES OF COMPENSATION LIMITS.—The compensation paid to any eligible individual